

Largemouth Bass



Largemouth Bass

(*Micropterus salmoides*)

Largemouth bass is a species of black bass in the sunfish family. It is an olive green fish with a series of dark colored blotches that form a jagged horizontal stripe along each flank. The largemouth bass is the largest of all black basses.



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Spawning Season

Largemouth bass spawning season usually occurs from February in south Louisiana to April in north Louisiana when waters warm to and maintain at least 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Male largemouth bass seek out nesting sites with firm bottoms in shoreline areas ranging from one to four feet in depth, depending on cover and water clarity. Male coloration becomes vivid during this time in order to attract females into their nests for mating. Females spawn only once during the year, but may deposit eggs in several nests. The number of eggs produced by each female may range from 5,000 to 120,000 depending on her size. Largemouth bass eggs require about three to five days to hatch, depending upon water temperature, and another six to seven days before the fry swim off on their own.

Habitat

The largemouth bass is highly adaptable to a wide range of environmental conditions and inhabits a variety of aquatic habitats ranging from ponds, backwaters, slow moving streams, swamps, marshes, natural lakes, and man-made reservoirs. They most often inhabit shoreline areas which supply food, cover, and nursery areas for their young.

Diet

Largemouth bass are aggressive predators and feed on a variety of food items. They are best described as roving predators that employ chase and ambush techniques to capture their prey. In upland habitats, they feed on small fishes including shad, sunfishes, minnows, aquatic insects, crawfish, and freshwater shrimps. In coastal environments, their diet may include fishes as well as marine crabs and shrimps.

Age and Growth

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries use "earstones", called otoliths, to calculate the age of fish. Biologists remove these hard structures from the skull of bony fish and cut them into small sections. In a process similar to ageing trees, biologists count the rings that are visible in the thinner otolith slices. Finfish age, length, and weight data are used by fishery managers to estimate growth rates, mortality rates, and population size. The chart shows that fish grow rapidly during the first few years of life and then growth begins to stabilize as they get older. Once fish reach maturity, energy is invested in reproduction rather than growth.

Male Growth Rate

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. LENGTH RANGE
1	10"	8" - 12"
2	13"	11" - 16"
3	15"	12" - 18"
4	16"	13" - 19"
5	17"	14" - 20"
6	17"	14" - 21"
7+	18"	14" - 21"

Female Growth Rate

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. LENGTH RANGE
1	10"	8" - 13"
2	14"	11" - 17"
3	16"	13" - 19"
4	18"	14" - 21"
5	18"	15" - 22"
6	19"	15" - 23"
7+	20"	16" - 23"



Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.

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Largemouth Bass Quick Facts

The oldest and longest female largemouth bass aged by LDWF in 2009 was 11 years of age, 25.2 inches long, and weighed 9.16 pounds.

The oldest male largemouth bass aged by LDWF in 2009 was 10 years of age, 22.83 inches long, and weighed 7.61 pounds.

The longest male largemouth bass aged by LDWF in 2009 was 23.62 inches long, nine years of age, and weighed 7.32 pounds.

LDWF Contact Information

Recreational Fishing License
225-765-2887

Commercial License
225-765-2898

Boating Registration
225-765-2898

Lifetime License
225-765-2887

Enforcement
225-765-2989

Fish Tagging Program
225-763-5415